

Message Text

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AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
AMEMBASSY VIENNA

C O N F I D E N T I A L MONTEVIDEO 0249

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SHUM, UY
SUBJ: HUMAN RIGHTS: EMBASSY JOINS INFORMAL EUROPEAN HUMAN
RIGHTS WORKING GROUP

REF: 77 MONTEVIDEO 5816

1. ON JANUARY 12, 1978 EMBASSY POLOFFS JOINED REPRESENTATIVES
OF SEVEN EUROPEAN EMBASSIES AND THE LOCAL UN DEVELOPMENT
OFFICE IN AN INFORMAL, WORKING-LEVEL SESSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS.
THE MEETING WAS THE FIRST OF AN ANTICIPATED SERIES OF AT
LEAST MONTHLY SESSIONS TO COMPARE AND CONTRAST INFORMATION
ON RECENT HUMAN RIGHTS DEVELOPMENTS IN URUGUAY, AND TO
DEVELOP A COMMON UNDERSTANDING OF THE SITUATION HERE.

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2. THE MEETING FOLLOWED NUMEROUS MEETINGS BETWEEN THE
AMBASSADOR AND VARIOUS E.C. AMBASSADORS TO DISCUSS HUMAN
RIGHTS CONCERNS AND TO COMPARE NOTES AND COORDINATE ON
INDIVIDUAL HUMAN RIGHTS CASES.

3. THE MEETING, HELD AT THE BRITISH EMBASSY, INCLUDED
REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE BRITISH, SWEDISH, WEST GERMAN,

BELGIAN, ITALIAN, AUSTRIAN AND SWISS EMBASSIES, AND THE LOCAL U.N. DEVELOPMENT OFFICE. DUTCH AND FRENCH PARTICIPATION IS EXPECTED IN FUTURE ACTIVITIES OF THE GROUP.

4. AT THIS INTRODUCTORY SESSION, EACH REPRESENTATIVE DESCRIBED HIS EMBASSY'S BASIC ORIENTATION TO THE HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTION. ALTHOUGH VIEWPOINTS DIFFERED, MUCH OVERLAP WAS APPARENT. ESPECIALLY IN THE HIGH-PROFILE CASES OF INTERNATIONAL CONCERN OR THOSE SPONSORED BY SUCH ORGANIZATIONS AS AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL AND THE INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION OF JURISTS, THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE EMBASSIES ARE ALMOST IDENTICAL, AND IN SOME CASES WE ARE RESPONDING TO IDENTICAL INQUIRIES. THE MEETING ALSO CONFIRMED THAT REQUESTS FOR ASYLUM, IMMIGRANT VISAS FOR POLITICAL PRISONERS, OR ACCOMMODATION OF REFUGEES ARE OFTEN BEING MADE TO MORE THAN ONE EMBASSY.

5. COMMENT: THESE MEETINGS REPRESENT ANOTHER STEP IN THE INCREASED HUMAN RIGHTS CONSCIOUSNESS OF THE EUROPEAN EMBASSIES HERE (AS EVIDENCED BY THE RECENT EC DEMARCHE TO THE GOU -- SEE REF). THEY ALSO INSTITUTIONALIZE THE CLOSER WORKING RELATIONSHIP ON HUMAN RIGHTS SUBJECTS WHICH THE EMBASSY HAS SOUGHT TO ESTABLISH WITH OTHER MISSIONS HERE FOR SOME TIME. WE FORESEE SEVERAL BENEFITS FROM THIS RELATIONSHIP: INCREASED INFORMATION ON SPECIFIC HUMAN RIGHTS CASES AND ON GENERAL TRENDS, AN OPPORTUNITY TO SENSITIZE THOSE EMBASSIES WHICH RESPOND ONLY TO HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES WHICH INVOLVE
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CONSULAR DUTIES TO THE OTHER ASPECTS INVOLVED AND A PRACTICAL MECHANISM FOR ASSISTING ONE ANOTHER TO DEAL WITH INDIVIDUAL CASES AND TO ADVANCE SHARED HUMAN RIGHTS GOALS.
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